

Copper-clad quarter might just hit the jackpot

By Roger Boye

Q—I RECENTLY RECEIVED an unusual 1973 quarter in change. It is clad on the reverse side only. The obverse side is copper. Do you think this would have any value to a coin collector?—H.G., Woodridge, Ill.

A—Your coin is a collector's item if it is a genuine mint error. An expert would need to examine it to determine its authenticity. It is possible, for example, that someone outside the United States Mint altered your coin by cutting or peeling away the nickel outer layer [actually, the outer layer on the clad quarters consists of 75 per cent copper and 25 per cent nickel, but has a nickel-colored appearance; the inner layer is all copper].

Or, perhaps the obverse side was treated with an acid which changed the appearance. Such an altered coin has no value to a coin collector.

However, if the nickel-colored layer split off during the minting process, you would have a genuine mint error. It is difficult to estimate the value of these errors, but they are definite-

ly worth saving. The most valuable to a collector would be a visible copper core which shows the coin's design [one numismatic author estimates the value of such a coin at \$100].

Q—An inscription on my \$100 bill, series 1928-A Federal Reserve note, promises that I can redeem the bill for gold. Could I get gold or gold coins from the government for my bill? If so, where? If not, why not?—C.G., Forest Park

A—No, you cannot redeem your bill for gold or gold coins at the U.S. Treasury, although your bill is still "lawful money."

The inscription you refer to, which appears on series 1928 through 1928-D and on earlier Federal Reserve notes, says, "Redeemable in gold on demand at the U.S. Treasury or in gold or lawful money at any Federal Reserve bank." Those words later were made "inoperative" by federal legislation.

On Federal Reserve notes currently being made, the government promises only that "this note is legal tender for all debts, public and private."

Q—I have a \$10 Federal Reserve note, series

1950-B, that is L-shaped. A portion of another note, 1 inch wide and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, hangs down the left-hand edge of the bill. The figure 10 appears twice on the front and twice on the back of the hanging piece, as well as other engraved material. The note is uncirculated. How rare is it?—R.S., Skokie

A—Assuming your bill has a genuine printing error, it is a most unusual collector's item.

The 1950-B \$10 bills were printed on large sheets of paper, 18 bills to a sheet. After printing, the sheets were cut, forming individual bills.

Your oddly shaped bill was likely caused by this sheet becoming folded during the printing process, and the fold remaining intact during the cutting operation. Or, perhaps the error was the result of sloppy cutting of the large sheet into individual bills.

It is difficult to estimate the value of your note, not knowing how many others like it might exist. A conservative estimate would be at least five times face value.